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EXCHANGED

THE LEGISLATIVE CAREER

OF

JUSTIN S. MORRILL

AN ADDRESS

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THE CAREER OF JUSTIN S. MORRILL is a conspicuous and brilliant illustration of the training power of free institutions.

He belonged to the "plain people." He was the son and grandson of a village blacksmith: at his death there were gathered to do him honor the President of the United States and his Cabinet, the Supreme Court of the United States, the General of the Army and his staff, the Diplomatic representatives of foreign countries, Senators, Representatives, officials of every grade, and men and women of every station in life. And the gathering was not a perfunctory meeting of routine and formal officialism; it was a great assembly of those who had known and loved and honored the man, and to very many of whom his death brought a deep sense of personal bereavement. The flowers that covered his bier were the offerings of unaffected love. The tears that were shed fell warm from the heart.

The causes of this wide contrast between the lowly beginning and the stately ending this sketch will try to show.

JUSTIN SMITH MORRILL was born in Strafford, Vermont, April 14, 1810. He was the eldest in a family of ten children, and was early inured to habits of industry and thrift. His grandfather, in 1795, was among the hardy and aggressive settlers who followed close in the wake of that earlier generation of pioneers who wrested the little state of Vermont from between the conflicting claims of New York on the one side and New Hampshire on the other. These pioneers, occupants of a nondescript territory—neither colony, province, state nor nation—had imbibed the spirit of the thirteen colonies, and had borne their full share in the perils and triumphs of the Revolution, declaring themselves, January 16, 1777, a free and independent state. They had no representation in the Convention of 1787 that framed the Constitution of the United States, but afterwards adopted it and were admitted into the Union in 1791, —being the first addition to the original thirteen states, under the new Constitution.

The grandfather (Smith Morrill), with his wife, five sons and two daughters, joined in the new movement of population that had been stimulated by the admission of Vermont, and moved from Massachusetts into the northeastern section of the state, settling in what is now known as Orange county. The five sons settled in Strafford,—a part of them in what was known as the Upper Village and the rest in the Lower Village; Nathaniel, the father of Justin S., being among the former. One note of the thrift and sagacity of this family group is found in the fact that, besides carrying on the ordinary trade of blacksmithing

with its one man, hammer, forge, and anvil, they made use of a swift mountain stream that ran through the two villages, to drive in each a trip-hammer, and thus established in that rural community one of the beginnings of iron manufacture in this country, turning out for the use of farmers in the vicinity such rude implements as the simple needs of the time required.

Justin S. lived in his father's home the ordinary life of a country boy, with such sparse privileges as country boys then had, picking up what fragments of knowledge he could in the district school. This was supplemented by two terms at Thetford Academy, one of those institutions which did so much during the first half of the present century to deepen the foundations of a solid education, and a few of which seem to have tasted the fountain of immortal youth. His school education ended when he was fourteen years of age. His services were needed to help support the growing family, and he was hired out to work in a store in the village, at a salary of \$30 for the first year and \$40 for the second. On the completion of the contract, he engaged in a similar service in Portland, Me., where he remained four years. At the end of that time his former employer in his native village (Judge Harris) made him a partner, Judge Harris furnishing the capital and young Morrill managing the business. After about fifteen years of active and successful business, he was able to retire with a modest but sufficient fortune, purchased a tract of land abutting on the village street, cultivated and improved it as a farm, erected a house, married a wife, and settled himself, to all appearances, as a quiet, unostentatious, retired business man, who could afford to spend the remainder of his life in the undisturbed enjoyment of such simple and wholesome pursuits and pleasures as his fancy might select.

His career seemed thus to be practically completed. He had succeeded at an early age in reaching a position which most men expect to reach, if at all, at the end of a much longer and severer period of toil. We do not find that his

success awakened the slightest trace of envy in any mind. His courtesy in dealing with customers, his absolute and unvarying integrity, his gentle helpfulness toward the lowly and the less fortunate, his genial sunniness of temper, his watchful and intelligent study of the needs of the community and his foresight in anticipating them had won for him a unique place among his neighbors; so that, while he was little known beyond the borders of his own county, he there easily took first rank among the most respected and honored citizens.

What seemed the close of a career was only its beginning. He had not yet erected a monument; he had simply laid the foundation, broad and deep and secure, as a pedestal on which the finished statue of his career was to stand. In 1854, the representative from his congressional district declined a reelection, and Mr. Morrill was brought forward as a candidate by his neighbors of Orange county. He was, as I have said, practically unknown to the district. His immediate predecessors had been among the ablest and most eminent public men of a state whose annals are crowded with great names, one of them being that Jacob Collamer, who afterwards represented Vermont in the United States Senate, and who has been selected to stand side by side with Ethan Allen as a representative of Vermont, in Statuary Hall at Washington. It is not surprising that other counties of the district should have looked with some distrust upon this new man, and that a bolting candidate in his own party should draw off a considerable number of votes (2,473). This, at a time when political parties were somewhat more evenly divided in Vermont than in recent years, proved to be a serious matter, and Mr. Morrill was elected by a majority of only fifty-nine votes. It is startling to think what momentous possibilities were carried by those fifty-nine votes. The laws of Vermont then required a majority of all votes cast to elect, and a change of only thirty votes out of 16,701 in a rural congressional district, removed almost outside of the great currents of public life and opinion, might not only

have changed forever the career of a single man, but, as we now see, would have checked or turned aside a great stream of constructive influences, the importance and efficiency of which it is altogether impossible to compute. I am not of those who would attach too great importance to the influence of single minds. There is a half truth in the saying of Emerson to the effect that the history of the world resolves itself into the biographies of a few strong characters; but that is largely, as I think, because such characters represent and interpret rather than create the periods in which they live. The greater truth is that expressed by Tennyson:

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

The great streams of human destiny flow on, not ordered by a blind fate, but by that great constructive Intelligence which rules from everlasting to everlasting. In one view, a man or a race seems but of slight account in the midst of these irresistible, all-compelling, cosmic forces. But, on the other hand, they often color the stream or change its direction, and, while each group or race must be swept on by forces mightier than itself, it is also true that each is so organized within itself that its final contribution to the sum total of human progress is largely summed up and expressed in some one generation or individual. As Lowell says:

"All thoughts that move the world begin
Deep down within the primitive soul;
And from the many slowly upward win
To one who grasps the whole."

That "one" may be a Julius Cæsar, or a Charlemagne, or a Frederick the Great, or a Hildebrand, or a Savonarola, or a Luther, or a Cromwell, or a Washington, or a Lincoln. Every such man is the embodiment and representative of the life of his era, and the loss or misplacement of that one may involve, therefore, the loss or misplacement of a whole historical epoch. Mr. Morrill, in his measure, was such a man.

In December, 1855, he began what proved to be the longest and, as I am inclined to believe, one of the most fruitful legislative careers thus far recorded in our congressional history. Certain it is that most of the important legislation of Congress during his long service felt the impress of Mr. Morrill's mind, and much of it took its final form under the influence of his judgment. The bolting candidate of 1854 never reappeared, and had no successor. Mr. Morrill was sent to the House for a period of twelve successive years, with majorities ranging from 6,573 to 9,337, and then, in 1867, transferred to the Senate, where he served continuously thirty-two years, making an unbroken record of forty-four years, on the shining rolls of which there is no mar or stain. I venture to say that no man ever approached him or, after looking into that noble face, thought him approachable with a proposal to do an act that was not scrupulously honorable. During the course of this long career, Mr. Morrill is said to have made not less than one hundred set speeches, and, according to a statement which Dr. True, of the Office of Experiment Stations, was kind enough to have prepared for me, his name appears in the record of proceedings no fewer than 2,477 times as introducing bills, petitions and resolutions, making remarks or speeches on pending questions, and intervening with suggestions or motions for the orderly conduct of business. He early showed a remarkable aptitude for the details of parliamentary procedure, and was soon recognized as peculiarly fitted to report important measures and take charge of them on the floor of the House. The clearness and simplicity of his expositions, his remarkable grasp of details, as well as of broad, general principles, and his unfailing courtesy toward opponents, coupled with unyielding firmness in maintaining the rights of himself or his committee, made him remarkably successful in guiding a piece of projected legislation through the confused tangle of a running debate. Although he spoke so frequently, he is seldom, if ever, found repeating himself, and the

range of subjects to which he gave intelligent attention, and to the discussion of which he contributed either opinions or facts, fills one with constant surprise. The wonder is, how any man could speak so frequently in the course of running debates, and on so wide a range of topics, without dropping into the merest commonplace.

In the second session of the 37th Congress, for instance, in which he introduced his second Land Grant Bill, he is recorded as having made remarks on the appointment of collectors of the income tax, on the payment of bounty to soldiers, on tea and sugar duties, on the direct tax, on the Post Office Appropriation Bill, on the Diplomatic Bill, the Homestead Bill, the Fortification Bill, the Treasury Note Bill and the Tariff Bill, on the Illinois Ship Canal, the financial policy of the government, the Naval Appropriation Bill, the claims for losses by the Rebellion, on printing the Patent Office Report, on Confiscation, on the Volunteers' Bounty Bill, on a case of alleged drunkenness in the army, on the Pacific Railroad Bill, the Army Deficiency Bill, the Tax Bill, the Army Appropriation Bill, the Newspaper Postage Bill, the Legislative Bill, the Civil Bill, and on the donation of land for a navy yard. In addition to this, he made a set speech in opposition to the Treasury Note Bill, and presented amendments to the Anti-Polygamy Bill, which he was the first to introduce into Congress.

There could be no more striking evidence of the breadth and versatility and accuracy of his knowledge, as well as the steadiness and alertness of his mental processes. His mind seemed to work with the regularity and ease of a finely organized machine, the motive power of which was a well-considered and tenacious purpose. He gave to his duties the same clear and placid intelligence, the same alertness of mind, the same absolute integrity, the same consideration for the opinions and prejudices of others, the same knowledge of the deeper forces of human nature, and the same high ideals that had shaped his earlier career; and all these qualities were enlarged and illumined in the light of

a wider range of vision which his higher position gave. In the committee room, on the floor of either House, in his intercourse with his fellow-members, in his relations to the great departments of the Government, in his constant cultivation of the gentle amenities of social and friendly intercourse, he knew but one thing—to obey the dictates of his own crystal conscience and to serve his fellowmen. Horace foresaw him: "*Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus.*" He was one of those finely balanced characters that almost elude analysis. His excellences were so uniformly diffused through the whole man that no one seemed especially to predominate. He was equally the philosopher and the man of action. Holding his own deep religious convictions with quiet but unwavering firmness, he had no word or thought of uncharitableness for those who held other views. A strong and uncompromising party man on general principles, he did not hesitate to speak and vote against his party when he believed it to be in the wrong. Mere majorities had no meaning for him, except as they accorded with his own convictions of truth and duty. Without a trace of asceticism, he always gave the impression of one who walked by an inner light and drew the inspiration of his life from unseen and immortal springs. He was a man among men: in the world, but not of it.

Aside from the comparatively fleeting memory of his fine personality, his permanent fame will be identified with three great measures, or groups of measures, either one of which would have been sufficient to give him a lasting place among the constructive statesmen of the Republic. These measures are:

1. The Tariff Law of 1861, with its later modifications, and the complementary system of internal revenue.
2. Measures for the construction or modification of public buildings.
3. The Land Grant Act of 1862 for educational purposes, and the later supplementary legislation.

No account of the Tariff Act of 1861 would be adequate without a general review of the financial and industrial condition of the country during the previous twelve or fifteen years, as affected by the Tariff Acts of 1846 and 1857, the discoveries of gold in California and Australia, the movement of population that immediately set in towards the gold fields, the filling up of the West, partly occasioning and partly occasioned by the Kansas-Nebraska legislation of 1854 and subsequently, and the great financial crash of 1857, following which the credit of the United States was so low that the Government was compelled to sell a 6 per cent. gold bond at $89\frac{1}{16}$ cents on the dollar. It should be added, however, that this great depression of credit was partly occasioned by the political disturbances preceding and following the presidential election of 1860, since the permanent debt of the United States (at that time \$45,000,000, bearing 5 per cent. interest) stood at a premium of 3 per cent in the market.

Mr. Morrill's first tariff measure had for its object to strengthen the credit of the Government, to provide for the payment of a floating debt in the form of outstanding treasury notes, and to raise the amount of revenue required for the ordinary needs of the Government and for the payment of interest on its bonded debt. The emergency was so pressing and so generally recognized that the measure passed both houses and was signed by President Buchanan only two days before the close of his administration. This Tariff Act was drawn on distinctively protective lines, and introduced for the first time into our tariff legislation the principle of applying specific and ad valorem duties, in certain cases, to the same articles; thereby creating, on the one hand, a partial set-off against possible undervaluation, and avoiding, on the other hand, the injustice of placing the same amount of tax on different grades of articles of the same name.

Whatever academic objection may be raised against the system of which Mr. Morrill thus became the sponsor,

and whatever practical defects may be from time to time discovered in its working, it is only a bare statement of fact to say that it has on the whole been sustained by the judgment of the country as represented in Congress during the forty years that have followed it—with the single brief break made by the Wilson measure (1893–97)—and has accomplished far more than its most sanguine friends anticipated. This measure, with its subsequent modifications, was the backbone of a financial system which enabled the Government to carry on the most costly and destructive war of modern times, and, after the extraordinary expenses of the war had ceased, provided means for paying off \$100,000,000 of debt per annum for several successive years; so strengthened the public credit that bonds of the United States bearing only 2 and 3 per cent. interest now stand at a premium in the market; increased the wealth of the country from \$16,000,000,000, in 1860, to \$90,000,000,000, in 1900; made us, in addition to being the greatest agricultural nation in the world, the greatest manufacturing nation, increasing our annual exports of manufactured products from a few millions to nearly five hundred millions; enabled us to equip European railways with American locomotives, to build battleships for Russia and underground electric railways for London, to erect steel bridges in Central Africa, to lay down steel rails in Russia, Australia and Java, and to take up government loans for Germany, Russia, and Great Britain. It is a system under which the center of gravity of the financial world seems slowly but surely shifting from London to New York, to rest at last in Chicago or San Francisco. These are the stupendous and controlling facts. Mr. Morrill neither devised nor foresaw the whole, and it would be idle folly to attribute these results wholly to the legislation that he promoted, or to any other single cause; but one of his enduring memorials will be the fact that the line of financial policy with which his name is identified has proved to be in accord with the direction of political and industrial evo-

lution, and that his fundamental conception in the tariff act of 1861 has remained undisturbed as the corner-stone of all our subsequent revenue legislation. And, even if all that is alleged in criticism of the financial policy of the government from 1860 to 1900 should be admitted, it must still be recognized that that is a wonderful system which could stand the strain and weakness of so great alleged defects and yet produce such marvelous and almost magical results. This is not the time or the place to discuss that system or the correlated system of internal revenue. I merely note it as one of the great things from which Mr. Morrill's name and fame can never be separated.

His connection with the adornment of the national Capital with great and worthy public buildings is no less direct, and, in some ways, quite as important as with those things which have just been mentioned. He was a prime mover in the completion of the Washington monument, after more than a quarter of a century of neglect; in the erection of the stately and commodious buildings in which are housed the State, Navy and War Departments; in the practical reconstruction of the capitol building by a system of marble terracing which has restored the west front to something like artistic proportions;* in having the old Hall of the House of Representatives set apart as a Statuary Hall, in which are gradually gathering, as the choice of the several States may dictate, the bronze and marble forms of those who have dared and suffered and achieved for the Republic, and whose silent lips will ever speak to the youth of the land lessons of loyalty and courage and patriotism and faith and hope. But above and beyond all these, worthy as they were and are, must be ranked his precious contribution to the land he loved in the erection of a noble and beautiful home for the Congressional Library. It is a

* Unless my memory is entirely at fault, Mr. Morrill stated to me while the work was in progress that the conception and design of the marble terracing were to be credited to Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, but Mr. Morrill was in a position where he could accept or reject the design, and was no less, of course, the sponsor for it before Congress.

strange thing that a man, born and reared amid the simplest surroundings, who had probably never seen an important work of art until he had reached the age of middle manhood, should have had so distilled into his soul, by the contemplation of nature and by his silent communion with the best and greatest thought of the world as embalmed in the noblest literature, that fine artistic sense which led him to idealize the Republic, and then to strive to have that ideal realized in enduring architecture. To his thinking, nothing was too good, or noble, or refined, or beautiful to represent the best impulses and aspirations of that great democracy whose heart he knew, whose language he spoke, and in whose future he had an immeasurable faith.

It was a fitting climax to all this that his very last speech in the Senate should have been a plea for the erection, on the square facing that where the Congressional Library stands, of a building that should be in like manner the home of the Supreme Court of the United States, and in keeping with the serene and lofty part which that matchless institution plays as the balance wheel of our great political system.

But great and far-reaching as were the measures already named, it seems certain from our present point of view that Mr. Morrill's largest fame will forever be identified with the measures which he devised and carried to a successful issue, for the establishment and maintenance of a great system of institutions of Higher Education, to be aided by the United States, organized and controlled by the individual States, and fitted in as an integral part of the whole scheme of public instruction. To a subject which has been discussed so much and from so many points of view, I can hope to contribute very little that is new, and it covers so wide a field, both theoretical and practical, that the present occasion permits only a bare outline of suggestion on the most salient points.

The law which now stands on the statute books of the United States was approved by Abraham Lincoln on the

second day of July, 1862. That act of the President was the culmination of a struggle which had been actively maintained by Mr. Morrill for nearly five years. He introduced his first bill in the House of Representatives on the 14th of December, 1857, just at the beginning of his second term in Congress. The bill was held under consideration by the Committee for a period of four months, and on the 15th of April, 1858, was reported to the House with an unfavorable recommendation, accompanied with majority and minority reports setting forth the respective grounds of opposition and of support. Five days later, Mr. Morrill took the floor in support of the bill. His argument was based upon the broadest grounds of public policy, maintaining that the public lands, being a common fund for the benefit of all parts of the country, should be so utilized as to promote the welfare of all sections in due proportion; that Congress had used a portion of the first public lands that came under its control in the Northwest Territory for the promotion of primary and university education, and had repeated similar legislation in favor of every state afterwards admitted to the Union; that this policy was too well established to admit of opposition on constitutional grounds, and that no legislation could more directly advance the interests of the great masses of the people than by providing means for bringing the new discoveries of science to the aid of agriculture and the other industries of life. His speech was earnest, elevated, persuasive, and weighty, and though his views were strongly antagonized at every point, in a House in which he and his party were in the minority, he succeeded at last in securing the passage of the bill (April 20, 1858), by the narrow margin of 105 to 100 votes.

An attempt was made to bring up the bill in the Senate at the beginning of the following session, but the antagonism was so powerful and determined that the measure was held back until the 1st of February, 1859. An uncompromising opposition to its passage was led by Senators Pugh, of Ohio; Clay, of Alabama; Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi;

Rice, of Minnesota, and Mason, of Virginia—an array, at that time, of powerful names. The last named Senator denounced it as the attempt to inaugurate a new policy, as “one of the most extraordinary engines of mischief” that he could conceive as originating in the Senate, as a “visionary project” unworthy of notice. Clay, of Alabama, characterized it as “one of the most monstrous, iniquitous and dangerous measures which had ever been submitted to Congress;” as a delusive attempt to do an impracticable, if not an impossible thing. But his principal opposition was based upon the argument that the bill was a direct violation of the rights of the States and an attempt to secure control of their most important interests through the agency of an educational system. Now, even after this short interval of years, his language has a musty flavor of antiquity. Let me quote a single brief passage: “The Federal Government,” he said, “is the creature of the States and is dependent upon them for its organization and operation. All its powers are subordinate to the States from whom they are derived. The States are in no wise dependent on the Federal Government for their operation, organization, support or maintenance. I stand as an ambassador from a sovereign State, no more subject to the control of the Federal Government, except in a few instances provided in the Constitution, than any foreign and independent State. This bill treats the States as agents instead of principals, as creatures instead of creators, and proposes to give them their own property and direct them how to use it,”—and much more to the same effect. Senator Davis, of Mississippi, confined his attention almost wholly to the constitutional argument, at the same time declaring that the proposed legislation was unnecessary and could produce no good results. Senator Pugh, of Alabama, expressed the belief that an Agricultural College would never be established under this bill. Senator Rice, of Minnesota, said that he “looked upon the success of this measure as bringing a slow, lingering death to Minnesota.” Senator Wade,

of Ohio, was its principal champion; and, after every expedient of opposition and delay and denunciation had been exhausted, the bill was finally passed (February 2, 1859), with some amendments, by the narrow margin of three votes,—the vote standing 25 to 22. The House promptly concurred in the amendments and the bill was transmitted to President Buchanan, who vetoed it, February 16, 1859, on the two-fold ground that the Government was too poor to make the proposed donation, and that the bill was unconstitutional.

There is no evidence, so far as I have seen, that the failure of this first attempt was to Mr. Morrill a source of discouragement or hesitation. He saw, of course, that it would be useless, even if it were possible, to secure the passage of the bill a second time during President Buchanan's term, and accordingly he made no attempt, so far as I am aware, to introduce it during the following Congress—March 4, 1859, to March 4, 1861—but on December 16, 1861, directly after the assembling of the first regular session of the new Congress, he introduced the bill a second time in the House of Representatives.

In the meantime, great events had been happening. When the first bill was introduced, the country was in a state of profound peace, except that political antagonism had become sharply defined, and thoughtful men everywhere beheld the portents of a coming struggle for political supremacy between the North and the South, though very few looked for physical violence, much less war. When the second bill was introduced, war was in actual progress. The southern States had passed ordinances of secession, formed a Confederacy with the final assent of an overwhelming majority of the people of the seceding States, taken possession of nearly all United States property within their limits, organized a strong central Government, placed armies in the field, and won repeated successes in their encounters with the army of the United States. The South expected, a great part of Europe believed, and many in the

North feared that the Confederacy would succeed in establishing its own independence on the ruins of a shattered Union. A special session of Congress, during the summer of 1861, had provided men and money for the maintenance of the Union, and when Congress assembled in regular session in December the minds of men were filled with nothing but the pending struggle and the means of bringing it to a successful issue. It is highly characteristic of the sobriety and patience and tenacity and serenity of Mr. Morrill's intellectual processes, that at such a time he should turn aside from the consideration of measures relating to the prosecution of war and calmly perfect his great measure for the promotion of popular education. It was also an act of faith and a prophecy. To his mind, there was no doubt about the issue of the struggle; and, even if his confidence in the perpetuity of the Union should finally prove mistaken, he still knew that no measure could more surely repair the ravages of war and safeguard the future than the one which had so much and for so long a time absorbed his thought. It may be inferred, however, from the meager notices in the *Congressional Globe* that Mr. Morrill found it impracticable, amid so many other matters of urgent and instant necessity, to secure time for the consideration of his bill in the House; for, on the second of May, 1862 (nearly five months later), the same bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Wade, of Ohio. The opposition to the second bill, in the Senate, was determined but unsuccessful. Senator Lane, of Kansas, declared that the measure would be "ruinous to Kansas," and that a more iniquitous bill had never been introduced in Congress. But after all discussion it finally passed the Senate (June 10) by a vote of 32 to 7. In the meantime (May 29), the House bill had been reported negatively from the Committee on Public Lands, and on June 5, Mr. Morrill had unsuccessfully asked leave to introduce a substitute bill; but the Senate bill, having been transmitted to the House, was taken up (June 17) and passed by a vote of 90 to 25, after several

attempts at amendment and delay had been voted down. Otherwise than this, there was not a word of debate on the measure in the House. Mr. Morrill simply remarked that the measure was well understood, having been before Congress and the country for five years; and he bore himself throughout as one who was sure not only of himself but of his support by the House.

One of the most striking facts that appears in connection with the discussion of the two bills, in both House and Senate, is that scarcely any one, except the author of the bill, showed any clear understanding of its real scope and meaning. Many of those who opposed the measure did so on alleged grounds which were plainly contradicted by the language of the bill itself; while those who spoke in support of it confined themselves almost entirely to correcting such misstatements. Nothing could better show how new was the field into which Mr. Morrill was urging Congress to enter than the course of these discussions. It is easy for us, at a distance of forty years and with full knowledge of the revolution that has during that time taken place in the whole spirit and method of higher education, to look back with something of amusement and surprise at the crudeness of opinion then displayed; but it should be borne in mind that both the direction of congressional legislation proposed by Mr. Morrill, and the theory of education involved in his bill, were new not only to Congress, but to the country at large. There were then in the United States less than half a dozen institutions, outside of West Point and Annapolis, where young men could obtain advanced instruction in civil engineering, while electrical engineering was absolutely unknown, and mechanical and mining engineering were taught only through a course of practical apprenticeship. The whole field of physics had hardly been touched except on the theoretical side, and such a thing as a physical laboratory did not then, I believe, exist in the United States. With respect to the natural sciences, the case was hardly different. A few eminent names like Silliman, in chemis-

try; Dana and Hitchcock, in geology; Gray, in botany; Agassiz, in zoölogy, had created interest in those particular subjects, but there was not an institution in the country, even those with which these distinguished scholars were connected, in which these subjects were not relegated to a minor and comparatively incidental position. Even Agassiz, when in 1848 he accepted an appointment in Harvard College, took the two chairs of zoölogy and geology.

Two powerful influences were working for a change. The first was the fact that scientific inquiry was beginning to reveal to the world its marvelous possibilities, and the other was a kind of blind, groping instinct in the popular mind, leading to the conviction that scientific knowledge ought in some way to be made more useful to the daily occupations of life than had previously been thought possible, and that the educational system of the country ought to contribute more directly to that end than it was then doing. Dr. True has published a very interesting account of several early attempts to work out this idea, and Mr. Morrill was in close communication with men who had caught the impulse of it. But neither colleges, nor teachers, nor appliances, nor methods of instruction were ready for this new demand. It is interesting to note that the great measure of relief provided by Congress was devised by a man who had had no advantages of collegiate or other higher education, and thus was free from the narrowness and prejudices which such an education sometimes produces; while, on the other hand, he was both by sympathy and by training a man of the people, thinking their thoughts, moved by their emotions, and putting into clear and effective speech what they dimly and vaguely felt.

Aside from the administrative provisions of his bill, the often quoted words which declared its controlling purpose were practical enough to answer immediate needs, novel enough to open a tempting field of educational activity and broad enough to cover the widest possible range of future growth. Mr. Morrill once assured me, in answer to an

inquiry, that the language was his own, and familiar as it is I may be permitted to quote it here.

After providing for the investment of the proceeds of the sales of the lands, Section 4 of the Act declares that the money so invested "shall constitute a perpetual fund," that this fund shall remain "forever undiminished," that the interest on this fund shall be "inviolably appropriated, by each state which may take and claim the benefit of this Act, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one College where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

Agriculture was then almost the only great industry of the country, and not unnaturally the congressional mind and the popular mind caught first at the idea of "agricultural" colleges and "agricultural" education as the subjects chiefly contemplated by the bill; but Senator Morrill himself, on repeated occasions, public and private, stated the true intent and object of the law, in language that leaves no room for doubt or question. At one time he said:

"It is perhaps needless to say that these Colleges were not established or endowed for the sole purpose of teaching agriculture. Their object was to give an opportunity for those engaged in industrial pursuits to obtain some knowledge of the practical sciences related to agriculture and the mechanic arts; such as they could not then obtain at most of our institutions called classical Colleges, where the languages, Greek and Latin, French and German, absorbed perhaps two-thirds of all the time of the students while in college.

"But it never was intended to force the boys of farmers going into these institutions so to study that they should all come out farmers. It was merely intended to give

them an opportunity to do so, and to do so with advantage if they saw fit.

"Obviously, not manual but intellectual instruction was the paramount object. It was not provided that agricultural labor in the field should be practically taught any more than the mechanical trade of a carpenter or blacksmith should be taught. Secondly, it was a liberal education that was proposed. Classical studies were not to be excluded, and, therefore, must be included. The act of 1862 proposed a system of broad education by Colleges, not limited to a superficial and dwarfed training such as might be had at an industrial school, nor a mere manual training such as might be supplied by a foreman of a workshop or by a foreman of an experimental farm. If any would have only a school with equal scraps of labor and of instruction, or something other than a College, they would not obey the national law. Experience in manual labor, in the handling of tools and implements, is not to be disparaged; in the proper time and place it is most essential, and generally something of this may be obtained either before or after the college term, but should not largely interfere with the precious time required for a definite amount of scientific and literary culture, which all earnest students are apt to find far too limited."

So clear was Mr. Morrill's view on this point that in the title of the bill that he introduced December 15, 1873, he called the institutions "National Colleges for the advancement of general scientific and industrial education," and he used to say that the name "Agricultural Colleges" would never have been applied to the institutions except that it had happened to suit the casual convenience of an index clerk.

At the risk of repeating what is already familiar, permit me to call attention to the cumulative marshaling of thought in the portion of the law just quoted. Each State is required to bind itself to maintain at least one "College," a term at that time applied to a well-known type of institution which provided a four years' course of liberal education in certain well-defined groups of studies. In keeping with this fundamental idea, the new Colleges were to make it their "leading

object" to teach "branches of learning," and, more specifically, such branches "as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." If the language of the law had stopped at that point it would have been sufficient to cover all that has since been done or can in the future be done by the institutions thereby established; for, what branches of learning can be conceived which are not "related" to agriculture and the mechanic arts? Certainly every branch of mathematical, physical and natural science is directly so related, and there is not another branch of science known to man which is not in turn related to, and in most cases essential to, the mastery of the great fields of experimental science. But if the language of the enactment had stopped at that point it would have fallen far short of the author's intent, and would have been liable to the misconception of providing only for theoretical instruction in the branches of knowledge named, in the same manner as the then existing colleges were chiefly doing. Accordingly, these "branches of learning" are to be taught in such a manner as to promote a "practical" as well as a liberal education.

It was the emphasis laid upon the practical element in education which gave its distinctive character to Mr. Morrill's plan, and this education, at once "liberal" and "practical," was to be provided for the "industrial classes;" meaning by that, not to suggest a gradation of rank or classes among the great body of the people, but merely to designate all those who were engaged in pursuits other than such as alone were then called professional; viz., law, medicine, and theology. But even this did not fill the measure of Mr. Morrill's thought. He did not aim to restrict the non-professional classes (as just defined) to a single field of learning, or to subject them to a single form or type of education. Other scientific studies than those related to agriculture and the mechanic arts were not to be excluded, the ancient classics were not to be excluded, and the new Colleges were so to cover the whole field of ancient and modern learning as to fit their students for "the several

pursuits and professions in life." Mr. Morrill's purpose was, in short, to bring all the resources of modern science into direct relation to modern industries, and to emancipate aspiring and talented youth from the necessity of patronizing only one type of College and entering only one restricted class of professions. This "practical" aim was a definite foreshadowing of what is now known as the laboratory method, which is coming to be everywhere recognized as absolutely indispensable to the best teaching of every branch of science, whether pure or applied, and to the widespread establishment of which the land grant Colleges have powerfully contributed.

It may well be doubted whether the States that accepted the congressional grant had any well-defined conception of what it meant. On its face, it was merely a contribution toward the establishment of a kind of College of which the need was already widely felt; but it was, in fact and in its consequences, much more than that. Every State accepted the grant on the conditions specified by Congress, and, in doing so, **entered into a contract obligation with the United States to make a College a part of its system of public education.** I find no evidence that even Mr. Morrill perceived the full significance of this fact: but the movement was in reality, though unconsciously, the most important step yet taken toward the realization of that great idea which Jefferson had conceived and to which he devoted many years of his life—of a school system in every State, beginning with the primary schools and reaching by regular gradations up to a State University, and through the State universities to a National University—all to be non-sectarian, scientific in aim and method, and supported by public taxation.

The success of the new institutions was not everywhere equal, nor was it secured in any State without a struggle. They were, in fact, entering a field of education that was practically a *terra incognita*. They were required to teach the leading branches of experimental science, natural and

physieal, without proper buildings, equipment or apparatus, and, above all, without the possibility of obtaining in the United States, at that time, men enough properly trained to fill the newly established chairs. President Gilman of Johns Hopkins, then a professor in Yale College, pointed out in an article in the "North American Review" that one of the most serious obstacles to these institutions at the outset would be found in the lack of trained teachers, a lack which happily no longer exists and which the institutions themselves have done much to supply. Another obstacle came from the antagonism of Colleges and so-called Universities already established; and their antagonism, supported by a powerful body of opinion, forced upon the public mind a consideration of the whole question of the proper function of the government, whether national or state, in respect to the support of higher education. It would probably be too much to say that the question has yet received a final settlement, but there is abundant evidence furnished by the growth of these institutions and the support given to them by the public that the question is well on the way toward solution, and in the direction outlined by Jefferson and successfully entered upon by Morrill.

Public education at public cost is not maintained for the sake of the individual, but for the sake of the State, the collective whole. If it is true, as Washington said, that, "in proportion as the institutions of Government reflect public opinion, it is essential that that opinion be educated," it is also true that **the education must vary in accordance with varying conditions of public life and the changing evolution of public institutions.** When the business of government was simple and confined to but few objects, an elementary education may have been sufficient to prepare the masses of men for the intelligent discharge of the duties of citizenship; but when that business becomes highly complex, as in our own time, and has to deal not only with the greatest national interests, but with matters of world-wide concern, then it becomes indispensable to the

welfare of the State that the highest attainable education shall be placed within the reach of every youth who has the ambition, the energy and the intellectual ability to acquire it. Mr. Morrill and the generation that accepted his plan builded better than they knew; and in their action I see the sure instinct of a great Democracy working out the highest law of self-preservation. The opposition to these new institutions was, in fact, based on the same theory and supported by the same arguments as have been used in almost every State against the establishment of common schools at public expense, against county superintendencies, against normal schools and high schools, against central control and against every other proposed scheme for improving them; but the cause of public education, in all its branches, has steadily advanced in spite of every form of opposition, and the public mind has at last fairly grasped the principle that **there is no logical stopping place between a public support of elementary education and a public support of the highest University education.**

Mr. Morrill never lost his active interest in the welfare of the institutions that had been founded by his instrumentality, and members of this Association, who remember his appearance before it at one session of its last convention in Washington, will never forget the mingled pride and diffidence with which he expressed his gratification in what these institutions had done and were doing and promised to do, and especially the touching note of personal affection with which he greeted the members as they thronged around him to grasp his hand. He was profoundly and unaffectedly happy in the visible fruits of his accomplished work, far surpassing, as he said, his fondest hopes.

It would be an interesting task, but one requiring more leisure than I have been able to command, to follow out step by step the evidences of his watchful care over their interests after they were once established. During the winter of 1872-73 the present distinguished senior Senator from Massachusetts, then a member of the House, was very

earnestly engaged in pushing a measure for the establishment of a permanent educational fund, from the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, which should be applied directly to the maintenance of public schools throughout the United States—the distribution to be made partly on the basis of illiteracy and partly on the basis of population. Senator Morrill at the same time had equally at heart the establishment of a permanent educational fund from the same source, the proceeds of which should be applied to the further maintenance of the Land Grant Colleges of 1862. The antagonism between these two measures, each proposing for the time being to absorb the entire proceeds of the sale of public lands, was finally reconciled by an agreement between the supporters of each to appropriate one-half of such proceeds to each of the objects named, and the two bills were modified accordingly; a limit of \$50,000 a year for each State being placed upon the amount of the College income, the common school fund remaining indefinite. The two bills, as thus modified, had the active support of a very large majority in each House, but were opposed with great earnestness by some of the ablest Senators then in Congress, and both failed of final passage through the inaction of a Committee of Conference which had been appointed to reconcile the differences between the two Houses.

In December, 1873, Senator Morrill introduced a bill (prepared by others, but entirely acceptable to himself) which combined the essential features of the two bills just named; but he did not find the conditions favorable for pressing it to a passage. Mr. Hoar, in the meantime, had reintroduced his bill in the House, and on the second day of February, 1874, the House, on the motion of Mr. James Monroe, then a professor in Oberlin College and a member of the House, adopted a resolution instructing the Committee on Education and Labor "to inquire into the condition and management of the agricultural and other colleges which have received grants from the United States under the Act of July 3, 1862." Mr. Monroe had been an earnest

opponent of the College Bill in the previous session, and this movement was looked upon by the friends of the Colleges as distinctly hostile, or, at best, as intended to delay any legislation in their behalf. The committee prepared and sent to all the Colleges a long list of questions covering every possible phase of their work and history, and many of them impossible of a definite answer for the reason that they seemed to assume a like condition of things in every State, or at least varying conditions that could be reduced to the same statistical standard. It was agreed among the Colleges, however, through some correspondence, that all should make the fullest and frankest answers that were possible under the circumstances, and this was finally done by all except two—Kansas and Florida.

On the 13th of January, 1875, Mr. Monroe presented the Report of the Committee (Report No. 57, 43d Cong., 2d Sess.).

The Report avowedly refrains from discussing all questions of general policy involved in the establishment of these institutions, and expresses gratification at the desire shown by most of them, not only to furnish the facts sought for, but to aid the committee by suggestions as to the best method of accomplishing its object. It then proceeds to summarize the facts ascertained respecting the sale of lands and land scrip, the investment of the proceeds in the several States, the financial management of the fund, the amount of income from it and the educational results. The institutions themselves are described as being "in a state of formation," some States having not yet made provision for the establishment of Colleges, and others but recently—only six in all having been in operation prior to 1865. The Report concludes, therefore, that it was then "too early to obtain intelligent answers" to the questions asked, and adds that, while "there is nothing in the results thus far attained that can be called discouraging . . . a considerable number of the Colleges have done work which requires no apology, and a few of those earliest organized

have already found time to take high rank among the institutions of the land."

"It must be added," continues the Report, "that the reports sent from these Colleges reveal, in many cases, a certain fresh interest and spirit of youth, a new enthusiasm, which when intelligent and enduring is one of the best prophecies of success. Strong evidence is afforded of the power of these institutions to establish sympathetic relations between themselves and the communities in which they are placed, in the fact that they have already received in appropriations from States and in donations from towns, counties and private individuals an amount almost equal, in the aggregate, to the whole bounty of the Government."*

It seemed proper to call attention to this Report, because it was the first and the last movement in Congress which has ever betrayed the slightest distrust of the work that was being done by these institutions, and it is gratifying to add that Mr. Monroe himself was so convinced by his inquiry that he not only made his Report, as we have seen, a strong justification of them and their work, but became and remained ever after one of their steadfast friends.

During the two years next succeeding, political excitement ran so high, in Congress and out, that Senator Morrill appeared to think it inexpedient to press for any further legislation in behalf of the Colleges. He had the subject continually before his mind, made numerous minor modifications of the bill which he had introduced in December, 1873, and there was never a day, I think, when he was not prepared to introduce a bill if there had seemed any prospect of securing time for its consideration. In March, 1877, Senator Sherman having resigned his seat to accept a place in the cabinet of President Hayes, Senator Morrill succeeded him as chairman of the Finance Committee and for a time his principal attention was absorbed in that direction. This of itself would probably have prevented him, for the time being, from undertaking further active efforts

*For the condition of the colleges in this respect in 1899, see Appendix.

in behalf of the Colleges, but a more controlling reason lay in the fact that Senator Blair, of New Hampshire, who succeeded him as chairman of the Committee on Education, devoted himself with great earnestness and persistence to an attempt to secure a large appropriation for the support of common schools. It was only after this measure had repeatedly failed of passage that Senator Morrill (with Senator Blair's hearty concurrence) took up again his favorite subject and secured the passage of the Act of 1890, as supplementary to his original Act of 1862. This Act is of so recent enactment and operation that it is sufficient merely to refer to it in this connection. It was a fitting culmination of Senator Morrill's work for public education. Its helpful and stimulating influence has been felt in every State, and the equal distribution under it has done much to correct the inequalities of the distribution of land scrip under the Act of 1862.*

Probably Mr. Morrill's last act in this connection was the introduction (March 17, 1898) of a bill providing that whenever the proceeds of the sales of public lands should be less "than is required by the terms of the Act aforesaid (the Act of 1890) to be paid to each of the several states, any deficiency shall be paid from any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated."

Mr. Morrill did not live to see this bill become a law, but a like provision has since been made by act of Congress, and the institutions which Mr. Morrill established in 1862 are now, in 1900, securely grounded on the inviolable faith of the United States. Few men in public life find their own ideals realized or their best purposes embodied in legislation, or in permanent institutions; but Senator Morrill, at the close of his career, could look back upon a great body of noble results as enduring as the Republic.

This outline sketch of Senator Morrill's work would be

* By the Act of 1862, 30,000 acres were donated to each State for each Senator and Representative in Congress to which it was entitled. By the Act of 1890, each State receives an equal appropriation.

incomplete without a brief statement respecting the growth and the present status of the Land Grant Colleges. This topic in itself would furnish abundant material for a crowded hour. At present I must confine myself to the bare mention of a few characteristic facts. It should be borne in mind that the Act of 1862 did not directly donate the lands to the States, but offered them to the legislative acceptance of the States on certain clearly specified and stringent conditions. The most significant fact, and probably the most unexpected, is the full and liberal response of state and territorial governments, and, in some cases, communities and individuals, to the initial action of Congress.

The land granted to the States by the Act of 1862 amounted to somewhat more than ten million acres, which has thus far produced a permanent fund of \$10,262,944, with lands still unsold of the estimated value of \$4,062,850.30; the entire proceeds being, in round numbers, somewhat over fourteen and a quarter millions. To this have been added other land grant funds amounting to \$1,441,577.38; other permanent funds, \$14,442,194.25; farms and grounds, \$5,543,108.91; buildings, \$16,274,000.53; apparatus, \$1,955,859.21; machinery, \$1,373,696.75; libraries, \$1,854,942.21; miscellaneous equipment, \$1,997,690.07, making a grand total of permanent plant of the value of \$58,944,137.61. The additions to the permanent endowment and equipment in 1899 amounted to \$2,365,152.43.

On this basis sixty-four institutions have been established. In 1899 they had a total of 35,956 students, with professors and instructors aggregating 2,893 persons, and with a total income of \$5,994,037.61, exclusive of the sums received from the United States for Agricultural Experiment Stations. Of this amount \$624,672.88 was received as interest on the land grant of 1862 and \$1,120,778.96 under the Act of 1890, thus leaving to them an income of \$4,248,585.77, or more than two-thirds of the whole, from other sources than grants of the United States. During the single year 1899, the States and Territories appropriated

for the maintenance and improvement of the Land Grant Colleges no less than \$2,287,917.98.

These figures furnish most striking and conclusive evidence that the policy of Congress, begun by the Act of 1862 and continued by the Act of 1890, has met a great public need, and that, instead of encouraging inaction or indifference on the part of the States, it has, on the contrary, stimulated them to a degree of activity far in advance of that of Congress. But this array of material strength tells only the lesser part of their story. In the range and quality of their scholarship, in their combination of the practical and experimental with the theoretical, in their adjustment to the conditions of public education in their several States, in their responsiveness to public needs and the best public opinion, they occupy a distinctive position and are doing a work which has profoundly affected the educational life of the country. I confidently believe that, with a charter broad enough to cover the whole range of learning, the future of higher education in this country belongs largely to these Colleges, and to the influences that they have created and must continue to create.

The accomplished work bespeaks the man. As these institutions typify American education, so Mr. Morrill in his person and character typified an almost ideal American citizenship. He represented more than most men in public life those deep and silent forces that are the real strength of the Republic—nay, they *are* the Republic: they are its only promise and potency of continued existence. They come from the sober thought of men and women who listen to the inner voices of conscience and duty and obey in their lives the sovereign law of rectitude—the steadfast souls who do the daily work of the world, not with a parade of virtue or an air of martyrdom, but with a cheerful courage and patience and faith because they know no other call than the call of duty; because, as Luther said, they “can do no other.” They are the men and women who support churches and schools and charities and cherish the sancti-

ties of home. They are the men of affairs who understand that there is no great or permanent or worthy success in business life except as it is built on a foundation of absolute truthfulness and absolute integrity, and that the standards of public integrity and private integrity are the same. They are the citizens whose judgments remain undisturbed amid the clamorous brawl of self-seeking demagogues and who then turn aside to swell that "silent" vote that often upsets all political calculations. They are the sane and honest masses of the people, who have thus far in our history proved equal to every emergency and risen to the full height of every great crisis.

It was the source at once of Mr. Morrill's strength and of his limitations in some directions, that in his own person he stood for and typified so much of these characteristics of "the plain people." He was peculiarly happy in the State he represented: a sober, energetic, thrifty people—loyal to their State, their Country and their God; patrons of schools and colleges and churches; quick to recognize merit in their public men and wise to continue them long in the public service—the best type, in short, of a true American citizenship—and Senator Morrill was simply one among them. He was of them in his origin, in his character, in his training, in his cast of mind, in his life-long habits of action: but he was of them at their best, and for that reason his career will, for all coming time, set a standard which every youth may hopefully strive to reach, but which few will surpass. The institutions that he established will live as long as the Republic lives. They will increase in wealth and influence and public favor; but their most precious possession and their perennial source of power over the young manhood and womanhood of America will be found in the example of the life and character of their founder, Justin S. Morrill.

APPENDIX

STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES LAND GRANT COLLEGES, YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1899

Condensed from statements published by the United States Department of Agriculture.

States and Territories.	Value of Land Grant Sold and Unsold.	Value of Grounds, Buildings and Equipment.	State Appropriations for 1898-9.	Total Income 1898-9.
Alabama	\$253,500 00	\$303,875 71	\$6,432 00	\$43,682 50
Arizona		139,406 92	11,996 13	38,382 74
Arkansas		319,880 00	5,000 00	11,995 45
California	752,155 65	2,097,664 84	244,090 64	459,884 79
Colorado	218,612 09	271,110 98	37,667 54	69,749 00
Connecticut	135,000 00	94,050 00	15,000 00	55,810 00
Delaware	83,000 00	165,650 00		31,955 81
Florida		109,283 77	4,000 00	40,627 35
Georgia	251,000 00	519,500 00		42,004 14
Idaho	900,000 00	178,000 00	10,000 00	34,000 00
Illinois	581,342 99	1,260,000 00	229,550 00	364,294 09
Indiana	340,000 00	701,500 00	68,158 34	140,047 22
Iowa	628,329 46	600,347 62	25,920 82	97,099 24
Kansas	504,548 03	437,909 25	10,728 37	67,294 62
Kentucky	185,925 00	533,917 74	37,659 98	89,672 21
Louisiana		82,216 00	10,000 00	22,687 42
Maine	118,300 00	305,015 00	20,000 00	78,631 60
Maryland	115,943 00	141,000 00	23,000 00	87,864 20
Massachusetts ..	219,000 00	1,489,758 15	45,000 00	396,946 45
Michigan	1,005,614 98	259,616 20		88,037 22
Minnesota	567,992 84	1,640,000 00	157,162 27	364,081 64
Mississippi	211,950 00	347,195 98	21,000 00	57,930 21
Missouri	437,353 99	1,151,898 00	80,725 00	185,689 32
Montana	225,000 00	168,000 00	12,000 00	38,500 00
Nebraska	181,821 97	1,127,000 00	213,750 00	292,352 61
Nevada	93,000 00	231,409 67	17,000 00	53,522 25
New Hampshire ..	80,000 00	167,316 24	5,500 00	55,920 75
New Jersey	116,000 00	466,500 00		52,252 60
New Mexico		78,870 00	1,107 24	29,529 43
New York	638,572 12	2,989,344 15	35,000 00	676,797 69
North Carolina ..	125,000 00	196,654 49	10,000 00	37,220 29
North Dakota ..	900,000 00	152,000 00	27,700 00	54,820 91
Ohio	524,176 30	2,797,000 00	176,058 15	277,573 06
Oklahoma		74,600 00	8,300 00	33,871 13
Oregon	140,694 38	128,500 00	26,583 95	73,386 16
Pennsylvania ..	427,290 50	874,000 00	43,416 25	115,679 73
Rhode Island ..	50,000 00	300,169 57	22,300 00	48,611 12
South Carolina ..	95,900 00	474,016 00	74,000 00	108,062 00
South Dakota ..	1,200,000 00	102,000 00	8,500 00	40,777 96
Tennessee	396,000 00	276,500 00		62,150 04
Texas	209,000 00	418,814 36	40,100 00	107,554 66
Utah		212,668 96	13,750 00	45,302 61
Vermont	135,500 00	734,744 95	6,000 00	69,305 77
Virginia	516,468 00	969,801 31	15,000 00	227,675 57
Washington		175,000 00	11,985 19	38,542 56
West Virginia ..	90,000 00	450,500 00	103,500 00	139,646 00
Wisconsin	302,000 00	1,466,830 89	282,000 00	365,300 00
Wyoming		152,455 00	9,268 46	33,728 36
Totals	\$14,325,794 30	\$58,944,137 61	\$2,287,917 98	\$5,994,037 61

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